

BZA Case 21220 - 1154 Morse Street NE

Sarah Steele

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Comments in opposition:

As a homeowner on Morse Street since 2014, I oppose the proposed extension for several reasons.

Firstly, the same architect is attempting to work again with another developer-led misuse of a single-family lot.

1. The extension is proposed to extend 16 feet beyond the neighbor's house, exceeding the 10-foot rule by an additional 6 feet. If I were the next-door neighbor, I would find this highly upsetting. The idea of creating a "small courtyard" between the two structures seems to be a questionable attempt to maximize the use of the entire lot, especially after extending it an additional 16 feet.
2. While they mention a shade study for the main house, they neglect to consider the shade created by the accessory dwelling unit. At 9 AM, this structure nearly completely shades the yard of the neighbor at 1152.
3. The proposal for a three-unit condo contradicts the intent of Morse Street. This area consists primarily of smaller single-family homes, and our narrow street is already experiencing parking congestion. Morse Street was not designed for homes to be converted into condos, especially not into ones with more than two units. As more projects are approved, Washington D.C. becomes less hospitable for families. Many of these units become so undesirable for couples and families that they are turned into temporary rental properties, negatively impacting the community. I concur with the comment in the ANC 5D Zoning video regarding how the accessory structure looks very suspicious as an opportunity for additional rental units, potentially being used as an Airbnb. Accessing this unit from the alley would not be safe for visitors.

4. The unusual courtyard situated between the main house and the accessory dwelling unit would require a 3-foot excavation (potentially involving a CMU wall at the fence line) and an

elevation change at the fence line between 1152-1154 and 1154-1156. I cannot imagine that this has been done often, particularly to lower the overall grade of the entire lot in order to over-develop it with parking, an accessory dwelling, and a sad below-grade courtyard, alongside the main house. This design is unacceptable.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. Steele". The "S" is a large, stylized initial, and "Steele" is written in a cursive script below it.

Sarah Steele
Owner of 1120 Morse Street NE